

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5409

FOR USEEC BRUSSELS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, ECIN, SP
SUBJECT: SPAIN: THE EC AND NATO

1. DURING MY CALL AT MY REQUEST ON FOREIGN MINISTER
OREJA JULY 16, ALSO COVERING OTHER TOPICS (SEPTELS),
I ASKED IF HE COULD GIVE ME AN INDICATION OF HOW
THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT, IN LIGHT OF ITS RECENT
PROGRAM DECLARATION, INTENDED TO PROCEED WITH
RESPECT TO THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY AND
NATO.

2. OREJA SAID THAT FROM A POLITICAL POINT OF VIEW,
SPAIN'S DESIRE TO ADHERE TO THE EC WAS AN EASIER MATTER
SINCE ALL POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORTED IT. THUS,
IT HAD PRIORITY OVER THE NATO QUESTION. THE
SPANISH GOVERNMENT WAS NOW CONSIDERING WHETHER
SPAIN'S FORMAL APPLICATION FOR ACCESSION TO THE
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COMMUNITY SHOULD BE PRESENTED TOWARD THE END OF
THIS MONTH OR WHETHER IT WOULD BE BETTER TO WAIT
UNTIL SEPTEMBER. HE PERSONALLY SAW MANY ADVANTAGES
TO SUBMITTING THE FORMAL REQUEST BEFORE THE END
OF JULY, AND HE WOULD SO PROPOSE TO THE SPANISH
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AT ITS MEETING ON JULY 20.
HE WAS INCLINED TO THINK THAT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD

BE ACCEPTED, IN WHICH CASE HE WOULD PLAN TO BE IN BRUSSELS ON JULY 27 AND 28, PRESUMABLY TO MAKE THE FORMAL SUBMISSION TO THE EC PRESIDENT ON THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 27.

2. OREJA SAID AS HE SAW THE TIME TABLE, THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS COULD REACH A FAVORABLE DECISION IN PRINCIPLE IN SEPTEMBER, REFERRING THE MATTER AT THAT TIME TO THE COMMISSION. HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE MID-1978 BEFORE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BEGIN IN EARNEST. OPTIMISTICALLY HE SPOKE OF 1980 AS BEING A POSSIBLE ACCESSION DATE.

3. OREJA DID NOT MINIMIZE THE VARIOUS PROBLEMS WHICH SPAIN WOULD FACE IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR ACCESSION TO THE COMMUNITY, BUT HE CLEARLY GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE AT LEAST THOUGHT THAT SPAIN WOULD INDEED MAKE IT.

4. I ASKED OREJA WHETHER HE LINKED THE EC AND NATO QUESTIONS. TO THIS HE REPLIED THAT THERE WAS A LINKAGE IN THAT A POSITIVE RESPONSE IN PRINCIPLE BY THE EC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO THE SPANISH APPLICATION WOULD CLEARLY HELP THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE WITH RESPECT TO POSSIBLE SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO. THE NATO QUESTION WAS, IN ANY EVENT, A CONFIDENTIAL

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MUCH MORE DIFFICULT ONE SINCE ONLY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CENTER PARTY ARE SPECIFICALLY IN FAVOR OF SPANISH ENTRY.

5. OREJA MENTIONED HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SECRETARY IN PARIS ON JUNE 23 AND SAID THAT THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAD SET NO TARGET DATE FOR SEEKING NATO MEMBERSHIP. AT THE PRESENT TIME, HE HAD NO IDEA WHEN THE MATTER MIGHT COME UP IN THE CORTES. AT SOME POINT HE WOULD HAVE TO GIVE A GENERAL FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENT TO THE CORTES, BUT HE HAD NO DATE IN MIND AT THIS TIME. HE THOUGHT IT WAS LIKELY THAT THE QUESTION WOULD NOT ARISE EARLIER THAN OCTOBER, AND IN FACT THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE MUCH CLOSER TO THE END OF THE YEAR WHEN THAT THERE WOULD BE A PRE-LIMINARY DEBATE IN THE CORTES ON NATO MEMBERSHIP. SUCH DEBATE WOULD NOT LEAD TO A VOTE, BUT IT WOULD GIVE A FAIRLY GOOD VIEW OF THE STATE OF OPINION AND OF THE DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY THOSE IN THE GOVERNMENT WHO FAVOR SPANISH ENTRY INTO NATO MIGHT HAVE.

6. OREJA MADE THE PARTICULAR POINT THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF NATO ITSELF WOULD CONTINUE TO TREAT THE SPANISH QUESTION IN VERY LOW KEY OVER THE NEXT MONTHS SINCE MY INDICATIONS OF PRESSURE WOULD NOT BE USEFUL. IN HIS VIEW, CONSIDERATION BY NAC OF AN INVITATION" TO SPAIN TO JOINT NATO WOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER THE INITIAL CORTES DEBATE HAD BEEN COMPLETED AND IT WAS DETERMINED WHAT SPANISH POLICY WOULD BE. FOR HIS PART, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR NATO TO ISSUE AN INVITATION TO SPAIN WITHOUT FIRST KNOWING WHAT THE SPANISH REACTION MIGHT BE.

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7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH OREJA MADE NO MENTION OF GIBRALTAR, WE KNOW FROM OTHER FOREIGN OFFICE SOURCES THAT THE GIBRALTAR QUESTION REMAINS AN IMPORTANT ONE AND THAT PROGRESS ON THIS ISSUE WILL BE CLOSELY RELATED TO THE HANDLING OF THE NATO ISSUE. STABLER

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